





THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

FRIDAY, NOV. 4, 1864.

The House met at 3:15 p.m. Members present—Messrs. DeCosmos, Franklin, Young, Trimble, Diebold, Southgate, Duncan, Cochran, Caravel.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The Speaker read a communication from the Legislative Council stating that they would be happy to meet the Assembly in conference on the Harbours Bill on Monday next, at 3 o'clock.

CHIEF JUSTICE'S SALARY BILL.

The bill came down from the Legislative Council with an amendment to the short title. The Speaker said it was a money bill, and not subject to amendment by the Legislative Council; but as the amendment might be looked at as a clerical one it might be allowed to pass.

THE BILL WAS PASSED.

The bill was passed as amended accordingly.

FLOUR MILLS.

The resolution passed in committee yesterday came up for adoption.

Mr. DeCosmos moved its recommittal, as the sum was too small. Agreed to.

THE HOUSE WENT INTO COMMITTEE.

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THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Young gentlemen, like young people, have trying ordeals to pass through. No sooner are they out of one misfortune than they are into another. Still, with a vitality and elasticity unknown in more mature years, they shake off misfortune as the sparrow does the water, and are ready once more to plunge into trouble. As an infant colony, we have had our share of the stumbles and falls of early life, and with the happy oblivionness of past dangers—the utter defiance of stern experience—which characterises childhood, still go on our unthinking way, as if the world were a play-ground, and our chief occupation a hunt after butterflies. From 1858, our history is one of official mismanagement and abuse. Now it is defaulting, then embezzling, and again gross neglect. When the mischief has grown too great for concealment, it forces itself on public attention, and for a time we wonder how such things can be; but our dear-bought experience never teaches us to amend. It is true we sometimes punish the guilty when they are discovered, but we take no pains to guard against future malfeasance.

The evidence which has just been given in our Police Court in the case against the Superintendent of Police, unfolds a state of affairs as disgraceful to the public department as it is injurious to the public interest; yet, although the abuses have probably existed in Victoria since the year 1859, by the merest accident, we are first made acquainted with the facts in the Police Court in this autumn of 1864. It is not to be presumed, however, that during all this period gamblers have been playing their vocation in the public houses of the place, unknown to the public. On the contrary, everybody seemed to be aware of the matter but those whose special duty it was to detect and bring the culprits to justice. Occasionally an unfortunate Chinaman would be brought up for winning his brother celestial's money, but it was frequently pointed out by the press, that there was much higher game to look after than the Chinese. "The high game," however, remained unmolested. We do not intend here, of course, to touch upon the merits of the case which was yesterday sent to a higher court than that of the Police, but we think there has been sufficient adduced to show how much our Police Department requires the sweeping hand of reform. A department that has been a terror to the influential evil-doer is not the sort of institution required in a colony like our own.

Playing a game of "faro" is, without doubt, morally no worse than betting on horse-races; but so long as the former is prohibited by law, justice requires that its supporters and abettors should be punished. We cannot afford to have the law winked at; for the foundation of society depends on its impartial and strict administration. If gambling is to be permitted, let it be done openly, under the control and by license from the authorities; but let it not be said that we have laws in the country which we cannot enforce. So far, we have got along peacefully and quietly. For a town peopled up originally by men of all nationalities, and migratory in their tendencies, Victoria has been peculiarly exempt from crimes of a serious character; but this satisfactory result has been in no way owing to the exertions of the police. In their case, we have had the evil effects of ill-paid officers. We have had men sent to watch over the public safety, who were paid the merest pittance, and that in the most irregular and fitful manner. Can it be wondered at, that under such circumstances, the guardianship of the public should be subject to influences which at the very root of public safety? Are members of the police presumed to be of a higher order of human nature than the general race of mankind, that temptation should come to them in vain? Experience teaches us otherwise. We find in all countries the necessity of the people watching the police as much as the police watching the people. If we desire honesty in any branch of the public service, in fact, we must watch it; but our first duty is to remove that most productive of all moral weaknesses—the want of money. Our police force is too inadequately paid to become efficient. We shall have to pay more, and hold out an inducement for a good class of men to enrol themselves in the force. We shall also have to alter the whole internal management of the department. A few days ago we suggested the propriety of putting the institution under the control of the corporation—into the hands of the people. The thing will have to be done sooner or later, as for the sake of economy, and for efficiency in protecting public property and carrying out the law. We have had enough of departments under Executive control. In every one of them there has been some glaring abuse that could not have existed a single day had the officers been in the gift of the people. We cannot yet obtain responsible government, and so assume the management of the whole of our public affairs; but we can get, through the action of our House of Assembly, an Act of Incorporation that will place the police department completely under the control of the inhabitants. Let our Legislature look to it, and not be carried away by the quivering of those who would oppose to-morrow, if they dare, the right on the part of the people to make their own laws.

THE GRAND JURY ASSEMBLED YESTERDAY.

After returning their bills against Charles Grammon, charged with being in the possession of stolen property belonging to the late George Roberts, a man named Hannan, in-stituting a writ of Habeas Corpus for the late George Roberts, and the three sailors of the John Stephenson charged with piracy on the high seas, adjourned till Thursday next.

THE CHARGE OF BRIBERY.

From the report of the proceedings in the Police Court, it will be seen that Horacio Smith, Superintendent of Police, has been sent to the higher court for trial on the charge preferred against him by ex-Sergeant Wilmer. Mr. McCreight, counsel for the accused, declined to disclose the nature of the defence which he will set up.

THE BALL AT NEW WESTMINSTER.

The Hudson Bay Company have invited the officers of the fleet to go to New Westminster on board the steamer Enterprise and return by her. The gunboat Forward will probably convey the band of H. M. S. Stutley to New Westminster on Monday.

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